

MINUTES
OPC MEETING
May 20, 2010

First Selectman David Campbell called the meeting to order at 8:21 a.m. in Room 206 at Town Hall.

Present were First Selectman, David M. Campbell; RTM Moderator, Karen Armour; Board of Finance Chairman, Murry Stegelmann; Board of Education Vice Chairman, Betsy Hagerty-Ross; State Representative, Terri Wood; P & Z Chairman, Fred Conze and Administrative Officer, Karl Kilduff.

Board of Finance

Mr. Stegelmann conveyed that the Board of Finance and the RTM have approved the Town's budget for the following year. It was basically a bare bones budget which received a total of eight no votes in the RTM.

It was also noted by Mr. Stegelmann that the Board of Finance approved all the transfer requests that were related to the March storm.

The group briefly discussed the possibility of looking into self insurance for Town and Board of Education employees.

8:28 a.m. Mr. Conze arrived.

Board of Education

Ms. Hagerty-Ross stated that the Board of Education is planning to address administrator negotiations some time this summer.

Additionally, she noted that the Board of Education signed a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with several other neighboring communities to participate in a new federally funded, country-wide program called Race to the Top. This program makes grants available to States on a competitive basis. States will need to set new educational mandates. An example of such a mandate may be to raise the number of credits required to graduate high school from 20 to 25. If for any reason the Board of Education determines it is not an appropriate program for Darien to participate in, it has 90 days to withdraw.

Ms. Hagerty-Ross mentioned that the Board of Education is still working on its search for a new Superintendent. In the meantime, there is a retirement celebration scheduled for May, 26th at 4:00 p.m. in honor of Mr. Don Fital. The reception will be held at the Tokeneke Elementary School and is open to the Darien Community and guests.

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Armour stated that the RTM met on May 10th and all ordinances that were on the agenda were passed. The RTM has voted fees and fines out of the ordinances, which means that the fees and fines can be changed in the future without redoing ordinances.

Mrs. Armour relayed information from Marc McEwan, Emergency Management Director, about a June 1st Media Guidance Training program being offered by FEMA from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Bridgeport Communication Center. Terri Wood expressed an interest in attending the meeting.

Planning & Zoning

Mr. Conte announced that Whole Foods had an Open House to benefit Person-to-Person which raised approximately \$20,000. The Grand Opening was on Wednesday, May 19th and the store seems to be a success with residents.

During the middle of next month Planning and Zoning will be looking at a zone change application for 20 acres of land at the Noroton Heights shopping area of town. The zoning change is likely to include a multi-use master plan. This generated discussion about doing a Build-out Study on Darien. The study would incorporate statistics on variables affected by town building projects such as: schools, drainage systems, sewers, traffic, sidewalks and so on. Presently, a new topography study is being conducted.

9:15 a.m. Mr. Stegelmann left.

State Representative

Representative Wood mentioned that the budget was passed during this session with some bonding and cuts. However, the budget will be of concern for the next Governor as many of the financial issues have been pushed forward. A special session should take place in June to deal with conveyance tax, the Citizen's Election Program and campaign finance reform. It was also noted that the State Conventions are being held this weekend for both the Democrats and Republicans.

Mrs. Wood explained that there was an EMS awards ceremony at the Capitol on May 19, 2010. This year marks the establishment of a new award honoring the service of John E. Doble, founder of Post 53. This year's recipient of the John E. "Bud" Doble Explorer Scouting Award is Darien Post 53. The Town of Darien was not previously notified of this award or ceremony.

Mrs. Wood discussed pedestrian safety issues. She would like to see the crosswalk at the Darien Train Station repainted. Also, she mentioned a new grant, Pioneering Healthy Communities. The grant encourages healthier lifestyles and it would endorse adding sidewalks in the hopes of encouraging walking/bike riding. A couple of groups of people from town are organizing to advocate for sidewalks on Hoyt Street.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 17, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. in Room 206.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary
Recording Secretary